

## **Shrink Rap Radio #27, March 5, 2006. Computer-Assisted Dream Interpretation**

### **Dr. Dave interviews Dr. Glenn Livingston**

(transcribed from [www.ShrinkRapRadio.com](http://www.ShrinkRapRadio.com) by Dale Hoff)

**Introduction:** Welcome to Shrink Rap Radio, the planet's premiere psychology podcast. This is your host, Dr. Dave, coming to you from the San Francisco Bay area. Shrink Rap Radio is the show that speaks from the psychologist in me to the psychologist in you whether you be amateur, student or professional.

**[Dr. Glenn] Livingston:** I had this dream that there was this car accident. I'd been in a car accident and I was lying on the road and I had to crawl past this yellow and orange tarantula and I thought I was injured or that I'd been crippled and that it was going to be a real ordeal to crawl past him.

**Dr. Dave:** The words you've just heard are those of Dr. Glenn Livingston as he relates one of his own dreams in the course of our upcoming interview. Back in 1990, the famous science fiction writer, Isaac Asimov, brought out a collection of short stories called "Robot Dreams." Well, as far as we know, neither robots nor computers dream, at least not yet. But, what about a computer that understands your dreams? My guest today has written software designed to do something pretty close to that and to do it on your computer. Of course, the software doesn't truly understand your dreams but it can certainly assist you in your own quest to do so. I interviewed Dr. Livingston via Skype at his mountain hideaway in New Hampshire. Unfortunately, there is a buzz on the line that I didn't hear during our actual conversation but that somehow ended up on the recording. The interview is sufficiently fascinating, though, that I'm hoping you'll be able to tune it out. Dr. Glenn Livingston, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

**Livingston:** Oh, I'm happy to be here. How are you today, David?

**Dr. Dave:** I'm great and you know what? I googled your name and I found that you have at least two different websites. I suspect that you might have more than just two and I was struck by how many irons you have in the fire. You seem to have a diverse skill set and a number of entrepreneurial efforts underway. So I'm

hoping maybe just quickly you could give us a quick overview of everything you're up to.

**Livingston:** First of all, it's a blessing and a curse to have so many irons in the fire and it's always been something that I and many people with an entrepreneurial spirit struggle with. I suppose that a broad stroke overview of what I'm doing is that I am focusing primarily on research psychology and rather than selling the end product of that to the large corporations like I used to do, what I do now is I sell it to the consumer so if I see an opportunity for a market that's under-served like, for example, the guinea pig market. People that owned pet guinea pigs were having trouble finding the information that they needed about how to keep care of them and there's actually kind of an interesting story behind that which I don't know how much you want me to go into but I set up a whole traffic stream and a survey process and then I analyze the surveys in detail and I go out and I talk to the people using some of my old clinical skills. When I really, really understand what they're looking for, having a hard time finding, then I hire journalists and writers and interview veterinarians and things like that and I compile an information product which is a book or a CD or a tape and then I just sell it back to the stream. So I've always thought of marketing as the process of asking people what they want and then giving it to them.

**Dr. Dave:** Interesting. Now is this guinea pig example a hypothetical example or something you actually did.

**Livingston:** It's a real site at [www.guineapigsecrets.com](http://www.guineapigsecrets.com) if people wanted to look at that.

**Dr. Dave:** Amazing. See, I didn't even know about this particular iron. Okay, keep going. What are some of your other irons in the fire?

**Livingston:** Well, that's what I do. And I do it in a wide variety of different niches. Of course, you asked to interview me about dreams, which is what I wrote my dissertation on originally and having grown up in a family of psychologists, I'd been taught to talk about and look at my dreams since I was nine or ten years old. It's been an ongoing fascination and kind of crusade on my part to get the world to think more seriously about their dreams and learn about the problems that they can solve with them.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay, now, before we get into the dreams because that's definitely the heart of this interview, but still, I know you're doing some other interesting things. For example, I thought I saw that you're doing executive coaching.

**Livingston:** Well, yeah. I am a coach. I don't take very many clients any longer. What I do is I teach coaches how to use the marketing process that I'm familiar with to build their practices.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay and I saw that you're working with your wife, Dr. Sharon Livingston, who I interviewed in an earlier show, that you're also involved collaboratively in a market research firm.

**Livingston:** Yeah. Everything I do really centers around the research expertise these days. And Sharon and I developed a specialty in understanding emotional purchase motivation. And in the marketing research firm, we consult for large companies like, you know, AT&T, Novartis and Liptan and people like that about how their brands are coming across and how they might like to advertise to consumers and what the consumers' needs are. Yes. I tell people I don't have kids and I don't commute so I've been able to do a lot of things in my career.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, yeah. And so one of the things that you've gravitated towards is being an entrepreneur in the world of dreams which is kind of a—that's an interesting thing to do since dreams, by their nature, most of us think of them as fairly ephemeral. You say you got interested in dreams because you grew up in a family of psychologists and you started to get interested in them when you were 11 years old.

**Livingston:** I did.

**Dr. Dave:** Now, just to jump ahead a little so that our listeners understand, you've developed a software product that helps people to understand their dreams so before we get into the product, let's back up just a moment and let me ask you, in your opinion, why is it important for individuals to try to understand their dreams?

**Livingston:** Oh. I can answer that very simply—because one way that we could frame thinking is as planning for doing. When we're thinking we're kind of cogitating over things that we might like to do some day if we have the opportunity and the nerve and the circumstances are right.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay.

**Livingston:** And, if you take it one step beyond that, well, dreams are really planning for things that we might like to think. So I believe that our most potent thoughts first originate in our unconscious processing and people might like to consider looking at their dreams because as you do, you open yourself up to a wealth of problem-solving ideas, abilities that you weren't aware were within you, creative expressions, energy that can lift your mood, overcome anxiety, inspire the people around you. Dreams are really a wellspring of life and vitality and creativity. And, you know, if you just do a quick search on dreams and problem-solving from google nowadays, you'll figure out that Robert Louis Stevenson when he wrote Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde had actually had a dream of a man on two sides of a window pane and he saw the evil man. He did. You know, the sewing machine—the needle for the sewing machine was invented in a dream by Elias Howe.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes. I've heard some of those examples but, you know, our listeners may not have. I always have to catch myself. I start to say "our readers." I don't know why that keeps coming up. Yeah. These are great examples. What's the biggest mistake people make when they try to understand their own dreams?

**Livingston:** The biggest mistake that people make is thinking that you can look it up in a book, that there is a cookie-cutter definition for every dream or that, you know, a psychic could tell you what your dream means or that somebody else can do more than make an intuitive guess. It's valuable to get other people's opinions because that can give you some ideas about what your dream might mean but people are very quick to give over their authority when it comes to dreams and I wish they wouldn't do that.

**Dr. Dave:** On the other hand, you've written a computer program that people go to for their dreams so how is that different?

**Livingston:** Well, that's an enigma, isn't it?

**Dr. Dave:** Yes. It's one I'm hoping that you will shed some light on.

**Livingston:** Yeah. Well, here's the thing. If you look at the public interest in dreams, the public interest is in "interpret my dream for me," "tell me what my

dream means,” “don’t make me work at it. Tell me what it means.” So, if my quest was to get people to think more seriously about their dreams, I had to find some way to ethically and accurately give them some of what they wanted in that regard so that I could seduce them, more or less, into asking themselves the questions that they really needed to ask themselves about their dreams.

**Dr. Dave:** Aha.

**Livingston:** So, if you’d like, I can tell you how the program does that.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. I would be interested to hear that.

**Livingston:** Yeah. There are several dimensions of dreams which the research has suggested were correlated with certain aspects of problem-solving ability and mood. So, for example, when people would remember more colorful dreams, it would tend to suggest that the problem that they were thinking about before they went to sleep, the struggles that they were going through in their daily life at that time were more amenable to some type of a creative solution. And so, I worked it out so that the computer would tell them that in a variety of different ways and when you actually work with the program, it pieces together—it feels as if someone is talking to you because the way that you read the computer’s interpretation will be somewhat different every time. However, the computer is not going to tell you that, you know, the solution to your weight-loss problem is to go on the Zone diet or something like that. It will tell you something more innocuous like, “this dream suggests that there is a creative solution waiting for you if you’ll focus on your weight-loss problems and perhaps you should consider the type of diet that you are looking at right now. And there were five or six different dimensions like how neat and organized the dream was tended to correlate to whether people were amenable to a right-brained or a left-brained solution. When the dream was very neat and organized then you wanted to focus people more analytically to think and reason where if the dream were more loosely arranged and illogically coordinated, then you wanted to encourage people to look at whatever problem they facing in their life with more childlike thinking. And the program will construct a two page interpretation that walks you through and tries to set the mindset for you to focus on your problem. And I found, David, that it was just enough to get people over their initial reluctance to look at that dream, just enough

to give them enough ideas and then the program actually interviews you about your ideas and helps you to think them through yourself.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm hmm. Yes. I actually downloaded the program and I just downloaded it today so I didn't have a chance to interact with it but I did see that there are a number of modules or components involved.

**Livingston:** Yeah. So, one module is that quick interpretation where you answer a couple of questions about the dream and then it gives you that two page interpretation. And then, you know, there's a module where it takes you through a gestalt work with your dream where you'll pick a couple of elements of the dream and have dialogues with it. And everything that it will do is if there is a particular symbol in your dream that's perplexing you, it will interview you about that symbol and then record whatever understanding you come to so that as you go through future dreams, the computer will flag those symbols as they come up and remind you of what it meant in the past dreams.

**Dr. Dave:** Now, that's an interesting approach because you're actually building upon the person's own associations and understandings to the symbol rather than resorting to an internalized, computerized dream dictionary.

**Livingston:** Exactly. Exactly, yes. And that's the type of dream interpretation that I think is so much more valuable than the cookie cutter interpretation that I told you about.

**Dr. Dave:** Right, right. I would definitely agree with you on that. And as I read about your program, it did say that it would generate something on the order of 10 million interpretations. Now, how would that happen?

**Livingston:** That's because each of the different variables—like how verbal, how neat and organized, how colorful, how pleasant—each of those different variables has several different levels and depending upon what level you chose, each of those levels have 25 or 30 different ways that they can be expressed so when you do the math of the combinations and the permutations of the way that the interpretation is constructed, you come to over 10 million possible interpretations. I'm using the word interpretation loosely. It's really a mind setter.

**Dr. Dave:** Sure. It really is kind of a—I get the impression it provides a stimulus for further thought, introspection, exploration.

**Livingston:** Yes.

**Dr. Dave:** And what kind of feedback have you gotten from people who've used this software?

**Livingston:** Well, people love this software. There's actually a couple of other features that people find helpful and one of them is that it's got some databasing features so you can tag your dreams with emotions, you can tag your dreams with categories of people that show up in them—every time you enter a dream, it's going to ask you, "How did you feel in the dream?" and it's got a list of the whole spectrum of human emotions. And it's going to ask you, "Were your friends in the dream? Was your family in the dream?" And you can create your own categories. And as you tag them dream by dream by dream what can happen is, you know, you work with the program for a month or two and you've got 20 or 30 dreams in there and you can say, "Okay, I want to look at all the dreams that had to do with my family" and you can pull up all those dreams. You could look at all the dreams where you were feeling angry and look at all those dreams. And it becomes a wonderful way to see how your unconscious is processing themes, on different themes in your life. People like it. People like it very much.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. I can understand how they would. You know, some people though are critical of things like dream work thinking that it smacks too much of the seventies, of the me generation, of preoccupation with self. What do you say to people like that? Loaded question, I know.

**Livingston:** Yeah, well. You know, there's a saying in marketing that says, "You can only attract to the degree to the degree that you're willing to repel." And I've found that—I've actually studied this. I've done surveys of the population and only 28% of the people these days say that dreams are worth remembering and analyzing.

**Dr. Dave:** What was that percentage again?

**Livingston:** Twenty-eight.

**Dr. Dave:** Twenty-eight percent.

**Livingston:** In my own studies. And my feeling about that is that there are, I mean, there's a large portion of the population that just doesn't believe in the existence of the unconscious and is only wanting to focus on purely rational thought and it's too much difficulty to look at what goes on inside us like that. And I'm not really out there to force them to do anything that they don't want to do and I think that the benefits are strong enough. You know, it's something that's reserved for seekers. You know, seek and you shall find and if they don't want to seek then that's okay too.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. Okay. So tell me a little bit more about your background in dream work. I mean, I know you got interested in it as a child. But, as a professional, what are the theoretical perspectives that you've drawn upon? Are there particular dream writers or theorists who've influenced you in the way that you've developed your own approach to dream work and developed this software?

**Livingston:** That's a good question. I was trained in modern psychoanalysis and in modern psychoanalysis, the dream is always understood as a resistance. Not the dream itself, but people's dream report is understood as a resistance because when someone chooses to tell you a dream, they're engaging in a disguised type of communication. They're not doing that on purpose. They're not trying to deceive you or anything like that but it means that there is something that they would like to say to you in particular, that they chose that dream to remember and bring to the office and talk to you about. So, that's what I would be listening for when someone would be talking to me about a dream. It's a very narcissistic approach I would imagine but I found it to be very effective.

**Dr. Dave:** So you're saying that in the process of telling the dream they are both seeking to communicate something but also seeking not to communicate it and they're basically communicating something in a very indirect way?

**Livingston:** Yes and my goal is to help them associate to their dream so that they can get to that. I generally won't interpret it directly. I generally won't interpret it directly because I believe that the dream was disguised for a good reason and only the patient knows when they're ready to overcome that disguise. And, you know, I've always kind of thought that as a psychologist that works with dreams, you

start to have x-ray vision. And if I were superman walking around with x-ray vision, I wouldn't necessarily go around telling everybody what kind of underwear they had on.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay.

**Livingston:** So, when I'm working with someone with their dream, I don't necessarily tell them what I see that they're trying to say. I would focus on questions and help them to associate to it.

**Dr. Dave:** Now, I'm sensing maybe possibly a little conflict between—on the one hand you're saying that people might not be ready to hear what's underneath their dream and on the other hand, you've written software that's going to tell them what's underneath their dream.

**Livingston:** Well, the software's not going to interpret the underlying impulse. The software is going to put them in a mindset that makes it possible for them to explore what's underneath their dream. Just like I would do in a session.

**Dr. Dave:** So, it sounds like maybe you're more Freudian than Jungian.

**Livingston:** Yes. I was more Freudian than Jungian. Definitely.

**Dr. Dave:** I'm on the west coast. You're on the east coast. And, I think the east coast is more Freudian than Jungian and the west coast is more Jungian than Freudian.

**Livingston:** Yes that's true. You know, I went to Yeshiva University and I studied in analytic institutes. So yes, definitely.

**Dr. Dave:** That's great. But you've definitely taken it some places that sound like they go beyond strict Freudian theory and that they draw upon research on the brain and research on the dream process.

**Livingston:** Yes. I've always thought of myself more as a pracademic than an academic.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm hmm. I love that. That's how I see myself too. As in being practical, applied.

**Livingston:** Yes, Exactly.

**Dr. Dave:** That's great. If there were a book that you were going to recommend to—well, I know first of all we would want to recommend your software and that your site, I believe is [www.dreamanswers.com](http://www.dreamanswers.com). Is that right?

**Livingston:** Yes. You know, I actually just transferred the software to a new company and I—well, you know what I'll have to do? I'll have to make sure that it is available on that site for people when I—I'll take a look at things tomorrow to make sure it's available so that by the time people are listening to this that they can get it there.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay. If you'll e-mail me the link that you would like me to use or like people to have—

**Livingston:** Send them to [www.dreamanswers.com](http://www.dreamanswers.com) and I will just redirect them appropriately.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay. So that's good. Is it okay to ask you how much the software costs?

**Livingston:** It's \$49.95 presently. I've got a new partner with it and I used to have it at \$20. So I'd be happy to give it to your users for \$20. I just need to get his permission which I'm sure will be okay with him. So you know what, David? Let me get you a special link for that.

**Dr. Dave:** That's really nice. If you get me a link, I'll just let our listeners know that if you go to my website of [www.ShrinkRapRadio.com](http://www.ShrinkRapRadio.com) in the show notes, there will be a link and it sounds like you'll probably be able to get this software at a healthy discount if Glenn is able to work this out. That's great. Hey, one of the things I liked about your dreamanswers website is that you share a couple of stories in which a dream led to a creative breakthrough and you mentioned a couple in our conversation. You mentioned Robert Louis Stevenson and Elias Howe in the invention of the sewing machine. And on your website you tell a story about Einstein having a dream racing down a hill on a sled that somehow led to crystallize his thinking on relativity and you also tell the story about how the shoe company Nike was going to have a different name until one of the founders had a dream about the goddess, Nike. Now, I'm wondering if you've ever had a dream

yourself that you could share with us that led to either a personal or a creative breakthrough in your own life.

**Livingston:** Oh sure I could. That's a good question, and actually, that's my first love is analyzing my own dreams.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay.

**Livingston:** I try to crystallize my dreams down to power statements so that I can actually take the result and implement it in my life. And I'll tell you the power statement first and the power statement is "Walk past the tarantula." And then I'll tell you the dream and how it came to affect me personally. This was back in probably 1997 and I was heavier and I was struggling to lose weight and I was also struggling at the time to take a quantum leap in my business and I was feeling like I didn't quite fit in the boardrooms. Some of the numbers they were throwing at me were a lot larger than I was used to and I was running to eat—it was around Halloween time and I was running to eat chocolate and candy and really struggling with my eating impulses as so many people do. I had this dream that there was this car accident. I'd been in a car accident and I was lying on the road and I had to crawl past this yellow and orange tarantula and I thought I was injured or that I'd been crippled and that it was going to be a real ordeal to crawl past him. And when I associated to the dream, when I thought of yellow and black, I thought of the candy corns that they make around Halloween.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, right, candy corn.

**Livingston:** I thought about that and so I thought I was going to have to lie on the floor with it. Well, I feel I kind of have to lie around with all the candy. And I thought I was crippled but I really wasn't crippled. I could get up and walk past it. And I realized that I didn't have to try to moderate the candy or anything but I could just walk right past it and I could just walk on into the boardroom and there was nothing so different about me as compared to all these other people who had all these fancy titles and everything like that. And I actually at that time stopped eating sugar for about a year and lost most of the weight I needed to lose and that is when I invented this research protocol that we actually sold a million dollar's worth over the next year and a half. So it was quite a breakthrough for me and a

very clear demonstration for myself personally about the power of dreams in my own life.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes. Thank you for sharing that with us. I'm really struck by—I like the phrase “power statement” and I take it that that's some kind of a, what, a statement of personal empowerment that you'll take from the dream and decide that you'll embrace and move ahead with.

**Livingston:** Yeah. I never really formally published it or anything. It was just something I used clinically and for myself. Like I said, I think that the purpose of dreams is to provide power in your own life. I think that we dream to live, we don't live to dream which, by the way, is another answer to the question about why are dreams a narcissistic pursuit. So, what I mean by a power statement is how can you condense the learning from the dream after you've analyzed it to death and you feel like you really know what it means but you don't know how to hold onto it and make it make a difference in your life day-in and day-out and become a part of who you are. And that's what I mean by a dream power statement.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay. So there are sort of two stages then. There's living with the dream, understanding the dream, sitting with the dream. But then there's a second stage of implementation, of somehow making a resolve about how you can manifest it in your life, some learning from the dream.

**Livingston:** Yes.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay. Well, you know, I don't want to hold you too long here. This has really been fascinating. Now, in addition to your software, I did start to ask you about a book. Is there one book that you would want to recommend to our listeners?

**Livingston:** The title is escaping me at the moment. It's by Delaney and Flowers and it's a very practical approach to dream interpretation.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay. I'll find it on the web and I'll put on my show notes. That would be Gayle Delaney I bet.

**Livingston:** Yes, yes, yes.

**Dr. Dave:** It was Delaney and—

**Livingston:** Delaney and Flowers and it's a dream kit of some sort and it's a very down to earth, practical, easy introduction to what you can do with your dreams to make a difference in your life.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay. Well, Glenn, I want to thank you so much for giving us this interview and I know that I have a lot of listeners who are interested in dreams and I think they're going to want to investigate your software. They'll probably want to take you up on this offer, this wonderful unexpected offer. So thanks so much for being with us on Shrink Rap Radio.

**Livingston:** Oh, you're very welcome. It was fun.

**Dr. Dave:** I downloaded Glenn's software, which is called DreamAnswers. I think when I first heard about this project, I may have been a bit skeptical. I believe that dreams are extremely personal and that you can't just look up the meanings of dream symbols in a book or a computer program. My own approach is to listen to the dream as a metaphor for things going on in my life and that it's very important to see what my own associations are to my dream symbols. Other people's associations can also be helpful but I have to feel free to take what fits and reject what doesn't fit for me. Now, as I say, I was initially a bit skeptical about the idea of dream software. However, I was in a workshop with Glenn a few years back. It was about market research, not dreams, but I have a lot of respect for him as a person and as a psychologist. So I really felt it only fair that I give the software a fair try. So far I've only tried it out on one dream. It's really clear to me that the program achieves its full potential when you record lots of your dreams in it. I believe it begins to build up a database of your recurring dream themes and dominant dream emotions. I've been keeping a dream journal on my computer for some years now. It would be easy enough for me to copy and paste all these dreams into the software and to use Glenn's program as my new dream journal. As I read through the responses to my dream and the suggested directions for exploration, I have to say that it all looks quite solid and not at all hokey. If you are at all interested in exploring your dreams, I would recommend you take advantage of Glenn's offer. By the way, I don't make any money on this endorsement. I think the software would be especially valuable to people who are relatively new to dream work. Very experienced dream workers will already have a number of conceptual tools at their disposal. However, even experienced dream workers may

discover some new directions to explore. Now I'd love to get into my actual dream that I entered into the software and the feedback that it gave me but I now realize that would take too much time here. So you're just going to have to explore it for yourself with your own dreams. I hope you're as fascinated by the topic of dreaming as I am. I'm a long time dream worker myself and I have a number of excellent guests in mind for future presentations exploring the meaning of dreams.

[music]

[letters from listeners]

**Dr. Dave:** Okay. Now, it's time to dip into our mailbag once again. First of all, I have an audio update from Mohammed in Baghdad who I interviewed on show number twenty four. I invited him to periodically send an audio update and I'm happy to say he has done so. In the audio clip you are about to hear, Mohammed responds to some questions I sent him. I asked him if he might be able to refer me to any psychologists or mental health workers there in Baghdad so that I could interview them. Also, I asked him to comment on the furor caused by the Danish cartoons. Here's his reply.

**Mohammed:** Hello Dr. Dave. It's Mo. I've been able to get some answers to the questions you sent me. But first, I'd like to thank all the good people who took the time to leave some lovely comments. Not that I deserve any, but this is just proof of how sweet people you Americans are. I asked about the psychologists in Iraq. I found that they don't have much chance of work in their specialization here. We do have a Department of Psychology at the college of ours, but we don't have such a thing as a marriage counselor. And at school, I remember having some social worker there but she didn't have any work to do. That was about twenty years ago. If such a post is still available at school today, such an employee would have less work than it did back then. About the Islamic cartoons, I have looked at a couple of them. They seemed very wrong. But now I understand the statement issued from the bureau of our supreme spiritual leader, Ayatollah al-Sistani about the cartoons. The bureau denounced the cartoons but it also blamed "the estranged tyrant group that have deliberately misinterpreted and manipulated the values of our religion and its blessed content. They falsified the religion's firm foundations and spread injustice and corruption in the earth. They adopted a methodology of accusing all

those who disagreed with them as blasphemous—a methodology that permitted the shed of blood of the innocent soul. This has reflected a deformed, dark image of Islam—the religion of justice, love and brotherhood.” Of course, I totally agree with this statement but I just couldn’t help but agree with one of the cartoons that shows the moderate Muslim as burying his head in the sand. We, as Muslims, are not trying hard enough to expose those groups of terrorists. I believe it is our duty to do that more than anyone else as it is our religion that they are reflecting a bad and erroneous image of. And, one more thing, I wanted to ask you, have you considered holding a debate in one of your shows? You can interview a couple of guests who hold different point of views of some issue and have them debate about it. I always find such debates very informative and stimulating. And I believe if anybody is capable of doing such a thing, it would be you. Good luck, doctor, and keep up the good work.

**Dr. Dave:** Mohammed, thanks so much for your candid remarks on the situation there in Baghdad. Unfortunately, since the recent bombing of a holy shrine, the situation has become even more dangerous there since you sent this report. We’re all hoping that you are safe and praying for peace in Iraq and throughout the region. I hope you’ll continue to keep us updated with your thoughts and observations. You may have noticed at the end of Mohammed’s message, he suggested he’d like to hear a little round table style debate here on Shrink Rap Radio. Evidently, he’s not alone. In my commentary after the interview on show number twenty-five, I did make some mildly skeptical remarks about the scientific basis of neurolinguistic programming, or NLP. And when my guest later listened to the show, she felt blindsided. I could see her point of view, and so I re-edited the show and I put it back up with that part taken out. An astute listener picked up on this.

**[Chris from New Jersey writes]:** Hello Dr. Dave. First, I want to thank you for putting out a great program.

**Dr. Dave:** Thank you very much, Chris.

**Chris:** Although I have no background or training in psychology, I really enjoy listening to your show and learning about the wide variety of topics you cover. Next, I want to applaud the comments you made during episode number twenty-

five, which was your interview about neurolinguistic programming. I knew only a little bit about NLP before the show and also heard that there was some debate about whether it was good science or just pseudoscience. After the interview, I thought you made some really valuable comments about this topic. Those comments provided a counterpoint to your guest's points, clearly defined what is science and what is not, and showed how NLP fits into that dichotomy. Later, though, I was also somewhat dismayed to discover that the comments that you made were missing from the mp3 version of the show posted on your website. About one minute of your comments are missing, even though those comments on shamanism, etc. were in the original version of the show that I downloaded from iTunes just days earlier. I certainly hope you can continue to present informative shows that might even indicate your well-informed views that may prove to be controversial. Since I am just an "armchair psychologist" and don't have a formal background in psychology, I really do want to hear the opinions of practitioners or experts. It certainly makes the topics more interesting and, also, helps give a sense of what is accepted by mainstream psychologists and what is not. Thanks again for creating some really great shows on interesting topics. --Chris from New Jersey.

**Dr. Dave:** Since I'm always curious to know more about who my listeners are, I sent Chris another email asking him if he would give me a little bit on his background. And, he wrote back.

**Chris:** Next, you wanted to know what I do for a living and, perhaps, learn a bit about the psychographics of your listeners. Well, I'm an engineer for a large telecommunications company. As an undergraduate, I was an Electrical Engineering major and Philosophy minor who went on to get an MBA. So, that means the only exposure I've had to psychology was one Industrial/Organizational Psychology class. I got interested in psychology when I started to do some career planning in college. Like many, I took the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as part of the career-planning process. I found it really interesting and I began reading about various theories of personality—Jung, Horney, Freud, Murray, Erickson and so on. Nowadays, I have a more general interest in psychology. I certainly think it helps prevent my left brain from completely taking over and balance is a good thing. Thanks again for a great show. Chris.

**Dr. Dave:** Hey, Chris. Thanks for your feedback. I'm flattered to have so many really smart listeners. It's also interesting to me that a number of the people who have written in so far have careers in engineering or computer science. Is it coincidental that my original major in college was Electrical Engineering? Hmm. As for taking on more controversy in the show, I have to admit that my own personality type is one that shies away from confrontation. However, I'll take a cue from my listeners and screw up my courage and see if I can bring it on. By the way, I'm trying to keep an open mind toward NLP and will probably be interviewing some other guests on that topic in upcoming shows. And, whatever doubts I have, I'll express in the interview itself so that they have a chance to clarify or to rebut.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, we're about at the end of the show here and, once again, I have the feeling that we've run long and I've noticed that in the last many shows, I've apologized for running long. Maybe I should stop apologizing and just accept it. I'd be curious to have your feedback whether or not you feel like the shows need to be shorter. It should be obvious by now, I love hearing from listeners. Please e-mail me at [Shrink@ShrinkRapRadio.com](mailto:Shrink@ShrinkRapRadio.com). Our show notes are at [www.ShrinkRapRadio.com](http://www.ShrinkRapRadio.com). You can leave voicemail for Shrinkpod on Skype or Gizmo Project. We also have a phone in the U. S. where you can leave voicemail. That number is 206-888-2746. By the way, I'll have a really interesting show next week in which my guest will be one of the pioneers of the newly emerging field of eco-psychology. Tell all your friends and family. Shout it from the rooftops. Stay tuned for the Podsafe music selection right after our closing theme music. You will find a link in our show notes to the Podsafe artist. If you like his music, I encourage you to go to the link on our show notes at [www.ShrinkRapRadio.com](http://www.ShrinkRapRadio.com). The song is called "Not on the Radio" and the artist is Jeff Smith. The title "Not on the Radio" certainly fits with Shrink Rap Radio and my own iPod/Podcasting addiction. Check it out. That's it for now. This is Dr. Dave saying, "It's all in your mind."

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